

ENDING THE SUSPENSION OF  
PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT  
FOR BURMA—MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED  
STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114-164)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

I am writing to inform you of my intent to end the suspension of preferential treatment for Burma as a beneficiary developing country under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program, and to designate Burma as a least-developed beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP program. I have carefully considered the criteria set forth in sections 501 and 502(c) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2461, 2462(c)). After considering the criteria set forth in section 502(c), I have determined that it is appropriate to add Burma to the list of GSP beneficiary developing countries in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) of the United States. After considering the criteria set forth in sections 501 and 502(c), I have determined that it is appropriate to add Burma to the list of GSP least-developed beneficiary developing countries in the HTS.

I submit this notice in accordance with section 502(f)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2462(f)(1)).

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, September 14, 2016.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 21 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1500

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING) at 3 p.m.

VA ACCOUNTABILITY FIRST AND  
APPEALS MODERNIZATION ACT  
OF 2016

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 859 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 5620.

Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) kindly take the chair.

□ 1501

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole

House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5620) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes, with Mr. ROTHFUS (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Tuesday, September 13, 2016, amendment No. 13 printed in House Report 114-742 offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LOWENTHAL) had been disposed of.

AMENDMENT NO. 14 OFFERED BY MR. BEN RAY  
LUJÁN OF NEW MEXICO

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 14 printed in House Report 114-742.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 54, after line 2, insert the following:

SEC. 11. IDENTIFICATION OF MATTERS RELATING  
TO PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT OF  
MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES  
WHO ARE PHYSICIANS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall identify—

- (1) the number of members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who are physicians employed at a Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility on a part-time basis;
- (2) the process by which the Department hires such physicians on a part-time basis; and
- (3) the process by which the Department hires civilian physicians on a part-time basis; and
- (4) the steps the Department is taking to recruit members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who are physicians for employment at Department medical facilities on a part-time basis.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 859, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, my amendment directs the VA to produce a report related to the part-time employment of Active Duty military positions at VA health facilities.

In 2014, Congress passed the Veterans Choice Act to help address the access to care crisis facing our Nation's veterans. As part of those reforms, the legislation called for a Commission on Care to examine how best to strategically organize the Veterans Health Administration, locate healthcare resources, and deliver health care to veterans over the next 20 years. The report was released on July 15 of this year.

The report's very first recommendation highlights VHA's provider shortages and suggests the VHA should expand their provider networks. They specify: "These providers must be fully

credentialed with appropriate education, training, and experience, provide veterans access that meets VHA standards, demonstrate high-quality clinical and utilization outcomes, and demonstrate military cultural competency."

Recently, it came to my attention that Active Duty military physicians are confronting a number of hurdles when seeking part-time positions at our VA facilities and that these hurdles are preventing an entire group of physicians who exceed these standards from caring for our veterans.

The Department of Defense employs over 11,000 Active Duty military physicians. For many reasons, a number of these physicians choose to seek part-time employment in civilian hospitals. In fact, physician moonlighting is encouraged by the Department of Defense.

Yet, despite these military doctors exceeding all of the VA's employment standards, longstanding red tape seems to be preventing the VA from hiring them. At a time when VA facilities across the country are struggling to hire enough physicians, we cannot afford to turn away qualified doctors.

Recently, my office raised this issue with the Veterans Health Administration, and I appreciate the VHA's willingness to work with me on this issue. However, we need to get these facts on the record in order to continue the conversation and address this issue.

I would also like to thank Chairman MILLER for giving me the opportunity to raise this issue, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do what we can to help soldiers treat our vets.

While I greatly appreciate all physicians who choose to use their training, skills, and time to serve our Nation's veterans, there is no one more naturally equipped to care for our vets than our military physicians.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the chairman and the committee staff on both sides of the aisle for their work here.

At this time, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague, Representative BEN RAY LUJÁN from New Mexico, for yielding.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to ensure our veterans are fully taken care of.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, even though I am not opposed.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I do support this amendment. It does require a report on DOD physicians who are part-time VA employees, and